



Panhandle News

BENEWAH, BONNER, BOUNDARY, KOOTENAI & SHOSHONE COUNTIES

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Although job growth has slowed throughout the Panhandle, many new developments guarantee Panhandle communities will have larger, more diverse economies in the future. Bonner and Kootenai counties still are attracting manufacturers from other areas and proving to be great places for existing manufacturers to thrive. Quest Aircraft is growing in Sandpoint, and Titan Springs is moving from California to Hayden. Unicep Packaging and Lite-house Dressing in Sandpoint are expanding and manufacturing facilities are under construction in Post Falls for Berg Integrated Systems and Biopol. A wide variety of businesses are headquartered in the Panhandle, and their job growth remains strong. New attractions and increasing national attention have the tourism industry growing by leaps and bounds. New facilities, fancy housing developments and a more sophisticated mix of retail and services are making the area even more attractive to tourists, second home owners and retirees. While construction is down across most of the U.S., the Panhandle continues to add single-family homes, condos and a wide variety of industrial, government and commercial buildings. The most recent developments are described in the following paragraphs. For more information about developments in the area, read archived issues of "Idaho Employment" available on-line at labor.idaho.gov/dnn/Default.aspx?tabid=1189.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

BONNER COUNTY

- Quest Aircraft near the Sandpoint Airport has been certified by the Federal Aviation Administration to deliver its Kodiak airplanes. The Kodiaks are \$1.3 million, 10-seat, single-engine planes that can han-

Panhandle Table 1: Coeur d'Alene MSA Labor Force & Employment Kootenai County

	June 2007*	May 2007	June 2006	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	70,330	71,130	69,950	-1.1	0.5
Unemployed	1,930	1,830	2,630	5.5	-26.6
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.7	2.6	3.8		
Total Employment	68,400	69,300	67,320	-1.3	1.6
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	71,580	70,790	70,870	1.1	1.0
Unemployed	1,570	1,370	2,190	14.6	-28.3
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.2	1.9	3.1		
Total Employment	70,010	69,420	68,680	0.8	1.9
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	58,360	57,430	56,900	1.6	2.6
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>	11,650	11,420	11,520	2.0	1.1
Natural Resources & Mining	550	500	480	10.0	14.6
Construction	6,340	6,170	6,280	2.8	1.0
Manufacturing	4,760	4,750	4,760	0.2	0.0
Wood Product Manufacturing	940	950	1,080	-1.1	-13.0
Other Manufacturing	3,820	3,800	3,680	0.5	3.8
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>	46,710	46,010	45,380	1.5	2.9
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	10,980	10,860	10,300	1.1	6.6
Wholesale Trade	1,570	1,570	1,500	0.0	4.7
Retail Trade	8,260	8,170	7,680	1.1	7.6
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	1,150	1,120	1,120	2.7	2.7
Information	930	930	1,010	0.0	-7.9
Financial Activities	3,160	3,130	3,010	1.0	5.0
Professional & Business Services	6,470	6,330	6,280	2.2	3.0
Educational & Health Services	5,530	5,510	5,440	0.4	1.7
Leisure & Hospitality	8,520	7,890	8,360	8.0	1.9
Other Services	1,480	1,470	1,520	0.7	-2.6
Government Education	3,420	3,710	3,420	-7.8	0.0
Government Administration	5,390	5,370	5,280	0.4	2.1
Government Tribes	830	810	760	2.5	9.2

* Preliminary estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

dle the short runways often encountered by missionaries and humanitarian aid workers. Following FAA certification, Quest will be scrambling to manufacture one plane a week to fill a three-year backlog of orders. When it started in 2001, Quest Aircraft employed 14 people. Today, it employs 120 workers and expects to hire more in the coming months. Quest plans to deliver one of every 10 Kodiaks it produces to a missionary or humanitarian organization at cost.

- Coldwater Creek, the Sandpoint-based retailer of women's clothing and accessories, continues to grow at an amazing rate. Since

its inception in 1984 as a small catalog company run as a home business by Dennis and Ann Pence, it has grown to employ 10,000 people, including 800 in the Sandpoint area. This year, Coldwater plans to open 65 stores bringing its total to 304 by the end of the year. It expects to operate 450 to 500 stores five years from now. Today, two-thirds of net sales are from retail stores followed by the Internet and then catalogs. In July, Coldwater launched "onecreek," a program for its most valued customers. They receive previews of upcoming trends and new merchandise, customer service specialists and personal shoppers, exclusive savings and promotions, free shipping on returns and a gift on birthdays.

- A boutique hotel opened in May next to The Landing Restaurant on Lake Pend Oreille. The Lodge at Sandpoint includes 24 guest suites, two meeting rooms that can hold 65 people each, a workout room, business center, spa, boat dock and beach. It employs 20 people.
- Panhandle Special Needs Inc. in Sandpoint recently enjoyed an extreme makeover. For more than 20 years, the company has trained the community's handicapped teenagers and adults for employment and helped them develop independent living skills. It maintained an upbeat approach despite its dismal surroundings. Volunteer Lois Miller began raising funds last year to remodel the dingy, poorly lit building that originally was a machine shop. She and the Sandpoint Women's Circle raised about \$60,000 in cash, labor and materials. When she heard about the Extreme Home Makeover projects taking place throughout the Inland Northwest by Sullivan Homes and KXLY Channel 4, she asked for their help, and they agreed. In three days, they transformed the building with a fresh coat of paint inside and out, a new bookkeeping office, new flooring, remodeled kitchen and bathrooms, an awning over the entry, improved handicapped access to the bathrooms and new lighting fixtures. Sullivan Homes has completed a makeover each month for the past 18 months. Panhandle Special Needs also plans to remodel and expand its work area, using the money, labor and supplies already committed by the community.
- Blue Lizard Native American Gallery opened in late July at Cedar Street Bridge Public Market in downtown Sandpoint. The store features Native American art, dream catchers, silver and turquoise jewelry, rugs and more.

KOOTENAI COUNTY

- Titan Springs, a high-tech manufacturer of custom springs and related products for the aerospace and medical-device industries, plans to move from North Hollywood, Calif., to Hayden in October. After nearly 50 years in California's San Fernando Valley, the family-owned company is opting for Idaho's lower costs and friendly business climate. Titan will reduce its workers' compensation costs by about 60 percent and its utility bills by about 66 percent. Titan is constructing a 15,000-square-foot building in the Warren K. Industrial Park. About half of Titan's 35 employees will move to the area. The company will be hiring replacements for the rest locally. Bob Potter, who generates leads for economic development agencies in northern Idaho and eastern Washington, made the initial contact with Titan's co-owner and chief executive office, Jim Glenn. Jobs Plus, the nonprofit economic development organization renowned for how many businesses it has persuaded to relocate to Kootenai County, played a major role in bringing Titan to Idaho's Panhandle.
- The American Legion recently named the Idaho Department of Labor's Coeur d'Alene office as the best in the nation. "By assisting veterans in a tremendous manner, The American Legion would like to recognize you and thank you for your role," the Legion's Economics Commission Chairman James Koutz wrote in a letter notifying Coeur d'Alene Manager Joann Edmiston of the award. The Coeur d'Alene office staff, especially Local Veterans Employment Representative Robert Shoeman and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist Brandia Young, were recognized for their involvement in the Idaho Panhandle's veterans community; their work on the annual Stand Down providing food, clothing, blankets, medical assistance and access to other services for homeless veterans; and the special diligence they show in helping veterans find jobs.
- The new \$6.6 million Coeur d'Alene Public Library is scheduled to open Sept. 10. The 38,500-square-foot building near City Hall will be more than twice the size of the current library on Harrison Avenue. It will boast a much larger children's area, community meeting space that will be used for city council meetings, study rooms, presentation areas, work space for the library staff and an enclosed computer lab that will allow computer training when the library is open. Training at the current library must be scheduled before the library opens to

keep the noise level down. Currently, library patrons can use nine computers. At the new library, they will have access to 60. The new downtown library will offer views of McEuen Field, Tubbs Hill and Lake Coeur d'Alene. The outside area will have wireless Internet access and plenty of benches. The city hopes to sell the old library for \$1 million.

- Under construction on 4.7 wooded acres near U.S. Highway 95 north of downtown Coeur d'Alene is a 56,520-square-foot building with 170 parking spaces that will replace the downtown federal building in spring 2008. The downtown building, built in 1927, is less than half the size of the new facility, lacks adequate parking and poses security problems. The first floor will contain the court clerks and the U.S. probation office, the federal bankruptcy trustees and jury assembly and grand jury spaces. Offices for the U.S. Marshals Service and the U.S. Attorney will be on the second floor and the magistrate and district courtrooms will be on the third floor. Coeur d'Alene residents are eager to know who will move into the historic downtown building.
- The Salvation Army broke ground in June on the \$35 million Kroc Community Center in Coeur d'Alene. When it opens in late 2008, the 116,000-square-foot center will house a gymnasium, indoor track, rock-climbing wall, indoor playground, recording studio, commercial kitchen, meeting and event space, two swimming pools and a 400-seat chapel and performing arts theater. The 12 acres surrounding the center will feature an outdoor amphitheater and playing fields. At the Kroc Center, the Salvation Army will offer educational, fitness and arts programs. Cities nationwide competed for one of 28 Kroc Center grants. Coeur d'Alene was the smallest city selected. The center will be operated by the Salvation Army and funded by a trust established by McDonald's heiress Joan Kroc.
- The Great Floors Granite and Stone plant, which fabricates granite and marble countertops and floors for builders, opened in open July in Post Falls. The new facility, employing 20 people, will help Great Floors meet growing customer demand for stone surfaces. The company, whose headquarters is in the former Masonic Temple in downtown Coeur d'Alene, operates 17 stores and employs 420 people in Washington and Idaho. Last year, it had sales of \$110 million.
- A New York Times article in July praised a software program developed by Chief Architect, based in Coeur d'Alene. The reviewer found *Better Homes*

and Gardens Landscaping and Deck Designer, version 7.0, easy to use to design a garden. It praised its large selection of plant, furniture, lighting, swimming pools, custom pathways and sprinkler designs and was impressed with the resulting three-dimension views of gardens. The program also keeps track of cost estimates for the garden make-over and informs the reviewer of the heights and growing conditions of plants under consideration. Amazon says the Better Homes designer is its best seller in the category of gardening and landscape software. Chief Architect also develops highly regarded software for designing buildings. It employs about 50 people near downtown Coeur d'Alene.

- Coeur d'Alene-based Nighthawk Radiology recently purchased two Minnesota firms, a large diagnostic imaging provider and its business services provider. Nighthawk was founded to provide after-hours readings of X-rays, CT scans and MRIs for emergency room doctors. The images are transmitted to U.S. board-certified radiologists in Australia and Switzerland. Nighthawk, which had sales of \$92 million last year, has been on a rapid growth spurt since going public in 2006. It employs about 100 people in Coeur d'Alene. When the Parkside tower currently under construction in downtown Coeur d'Alene is completed, Nighthawk will expand into 20,000 square feet of space.
- Tacomax, a stand serving Mexican food and fruit smoothies, recently opened across from Post Falls City Hall.
- Esquire magazine's August issue praised the great taste and effectiveness of Oxyfresh's lemon-mint Power Rinse. Oxyfresh, a multi-level marketing firm selling health and hygiene products, employs 35 people at its headquarters at Riverstone in Coeur d'Alene.
- The Velvet Hanger, a boutique selling casual, contemporary women's attire, opened July 16 in the Gibbs Center in Coeur d'Alene.
- Merit Boardshop in Coeur d'Alene, sells skateboards, snowboards, clothing and accessories. Store owner Jason Shadrack can provide great advice because he used to be a professional snowboarder.

RIVERSTONE DEVELOPMENT

- Developer John Stone continues to transform a former mill site along the Spokane River south of Interstate 90 near where it flows out of Lake Coeur d'Alene. Several office buildings, the Riverstone Regal Cinemas and a few eateries have gone into

the Riverstone development since Stone started the project four years ago. This year about \$100 million worth of construction is under way at Riverstone. At the center will be two three-story buildings that provide retail and office space on the ground floor and condominium units on upper stories. An upscale fitness center will serve the residents. A Barnes & Noble is one of the retail outlets planned for one of the condo-retail buildings. Stone's company also is building a 50,000-square-foot office structure and an access road. AmeriTel Inn is developing a five-story, 100-room Hampton Inn near the river. Black Rock Development, owned by Marshall Chesrown, is building single-family homes and condos near the river. Black Rock has approval to build up to 412 residential units there.

- In July, Riverstone celebrated the opening of a new 11-acre city park featuring a six-acre lake, play equipment, picnic area, restrooms and amphitheater for outdoor concerts. The new park also will serve as a trailhead for the Centennial Trail, which runs 37 miles from Coeur d'Alene to Nine Mile Falls in west Spokane. The \$3.2 million park was built by Stone's development company. Over time, the company will be reimbursed \$2.8 million from property taxes generated by the development.
- Bardenay Restaurant and Distillery of Boise opened east of the Riverstone lake in June. This is the third Bardenay restaurant. The first two are in Boise and Eagle. The restaurants distill rum, gin and vodka and serve them in Bardenay's trademark cocktails. The drinks menu and wine list are about 30 pages long. The regular menu includes appetizers, salads, sandwiches and satays — chunks of meat grilled on skewers and served with

dipping sauces. The 6,200-square-foot restaurant and distillery employs about 60 people.

- Stone recently purchased a pair of former Spokane Transit busses with the look of early 20th-century trolley cars. He expects the 32-seat shuttles to be transporting people from Riverstone to downtown and the new library within a year and plans to add the Kroc Center to the trolleys' loop when it opens.

SHOSHONE COUNTY

- Frank and Terri Robinson of Kingston recently began offering tourists the opportunity to ride ATVs on guided tours of the Panhandle through their new business "Somewhere Idaho Tours." As a licensed outfitter and guide, Frank Robinson puts together a custom-made route and itinerary, provides a packed lunch and guides the tour. He also provides training on how to properly ride an ATV, using Bombardier two-person ATVs.
- Noah's Canteen opened July 14 at Silver Mountain Resort's Gondola Village in Kellogg. The restaurant, which includes a full bar, features a classic mountain lodge motif. It offers soups, salads, pizzas, upscale dinner entrees and desserts. It is one floor below what used to be Terrible Edith's restaurant. A new arcade is expected to open in the location in November. A few weeks later, Silver Mountain Resort will open Silver Rapids — an indoor waterpark with three slides, a lazy river, a surf wave, pools and hot tubs.

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Services for Laid Off Workers

Idaho Department of Labor local offices throughout the state are staffed with professionals who can provide resources and suggestions for next steps after an individual has been laid off. Free copies of "Surviving a Layoff," pictured at the right, are available at every office. To learn more about services provided free of charge, log onto the Idaho Labor Web site at labor.idaho.gov and click on "Services for Laid Off Workers" under "What's News" on the home page, which will show you links describing the following:

- ✧ ✧ [Schedule of Southwest Idaho Job Search Workshops](#)
- ✧ ✧ [Register for Employment](#)
- ✧ ✧ [Unemployment Insurance Benefits](#)
- ✧ ✧ [Trade Act Assistance Program](#)
- ✧ ✧ [Adult and Dislocated Worker Program](#)
- ✧ ✧ [Idaho Local Offices Information](#)

